Disinvestment of NALCO

756. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal for the disinvestment of the National Aluminium Company (NALCO);

(b) if so, the reasons for its disinvestment;

(c) the private companies which are bidding in the disinvestment; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The decision to disinvest in NALCO has been taken in pursuance of the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission and in line with the policy of the Government that the Government, in generality of cases, will reduce its equity to 26 per cent or below in Central Public Sector Undertakings operating in non-strategic areas.

(c) Bids have not been invited so far.

(d) Does not arise.

News-item 'Disinvestment in Mid-Air crash'

757. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned Disinvestment in mid-air-crash, which appeared in the Telegraph, dated the 2nd September, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to clear the road blocks obstructing the programme of disinvestment in respect of the companies mentioned in the news-item?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Tata Sons Limited, the consortium partner of SIA, have intimated that in the light of SIA's decision to withdraw from the consortium, they are assessing

the new situation following which they will revert to the Government in the matter. So far, Government has not received any response from Tata Sons Limited.

(c) The disinvestment processes in VSNL, IBP, IPCL and Maruti Udyog are progressing according to programme. In Indian Airlines the disinvestment could not proceed due to lack of interested bidders. In the case of MTNL, Government would take a view after examining all aspects. In view of poor response of prospective bidders in case of Hindustan Copper Limited (phase I), the disinvestment in HCL may entail a financial restructuring of the company as a whole. As regards HZL, the sole financial bid received has been rejected since it fell short of the Reserve Price. Action has been initiated to ensure better response from the bidders when bids would be invited afresh.

Disinvestment of Policy

†758. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is no permanent and clear-cut policy of disinvestment;

(b) whether 249 public sector units have been earmarked for disinvestment;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether it is also a fact that customers are not available even for the profit making undertakings;

(e) if so, the total number of such undertakings in the country which have become sick/are on the verge of closure due to Government's policy; and

(f) the effects thereof on our economy?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) No, Sir. The disinvestment policy of the Government has been announced from time to time in the Parliament during the Budget speeches, and during debates on the matter.

(b) and (c) The policy covers all central PSUs, in the non-strategic areas. Currently, the number of enterprises, including subsidiaries, for which disinvestment has been approved by the Government and is currently under implementation is 30. These are: Air India Ltd. (AI), Bharat Heavy Plates and Vessels Ltd. (BHPV), Computer Maintenance Corporation Ltd. (CMC),

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.